

Utilizing Social Media Platforms in Teaching and Learning English Language: Perceptions of PTSB Students

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Abstract

This paper aims to demonstrate students' perception about the use of social media in learning English. With the vast spread of various social media, it is utilized by educators and content creators to teach and share English lessons. The teachers able to maximize it's usage in education approaches. To narrow down, this study identifies Politeknik Tuanku Sultanah Bahiyah (PTSB) students' perceptions on the usage of social media applications in English teaching involving a total of 100 Diploma students who are taking DUE50032 Communicative English 3 course. They are required to engage in social media-based activities conducted on the course's e-learning site for 10 weeks. Throughout the 10 weeks, they were instructed to complete several assignments, quizzes and tasks to be assessed. At the end of the 10th week, a questionnaire was given to the students to identify their perception of the activities that had been carried out. The findings of the study show that students think Wiki has helped them in improving their writing, while YouTube videos are widely used to improve speaking skills. Additionally, Facebook discussion groups are considered useful for learning grammar and vocabulary. Twitter is only used to receive information about the definition of words. A discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of social media in learning English language learning and suggestions for increasing the potential of such applications are also included. Educators are advised while endeavouring to promote knowledge sharing in terms of collaborative learning through social media, simultaneously, to raise students' awareness of academic integrity and also provide proper training.

Keywords: Perception, English Learning, Social Media, Application

1.0 Introduction

The rapid development of information and communication technology has enabled information to be received quickly by only using computer devices that have internet access. Any necessary information can be obtained at any time. This progress has also contributed to a change in the way of teaching and learning which is no longer limited to the content of textbooks or what is delivered by a teacher in class. Kop (2017) explains that one of the greatest contributions of internet technology in the world of education is in terms of spreading learning content without borders. Students can browse useful websites to strengthen their understanding of a subject or topic.

From the perspective of computer-based language teaching, various previous studies have shown the effectiveness of technology in strengthening the teaching and learning process (Weller, 2021). While in language teaching, Chambers (2020) says that computer applications, especially the internet,

have made it easier for students to learn grammar and vocabulary. Kern (2016) on the other hand thinks that technology functions as an intermediary between teachers and students. The effectiveness of a technology in the teaching and learning process depends a lot on the role of the teacher. Teachers should be wise in using available technology by using appropriate pedagogy. This is because, without careful planning, the use of technology alone will not help achieve the teaching objectives. Kern (2016) also thinks that internet applications need to be maximized in language teaching.

In line with the development of the internet, social media is now an increasingly popular internet application. Social media is defined as a group of internet applications built on the ideology and technology of Web 3.0 that allow the production and sharing of materials generated by users (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2019). The popularity of social media depends a lot on the involvement of teenagers. Wardrip-Fruin and Montfort (2018) stated that teenagers exposed to information technology at a young age are more motivated to engage in virtual sharing, especially through social media. Social media is also considered to be able to help students interact more easily, especially in terms of language learning (Annand, 2021) and obtain useful information in various formats such as pictures, videos and animation (Azer, 2018). However, Boyd (2019) has a pessimistic view of the effectiveness of social media in effectively channeling information. Boyd (2019) argues that, although social media can gather thousands of information in a short time, the level of attention given by users is very low, and most of the information displayed through social media is not read at all by users.

Most previous studies are more focused on applications that help students in writing such as Wikis and blogs (Huang & Hung, 2019; Kessler, Bikowski, & Boggs, 2021). An issue that always arises in previous studies is user confidentiality (Hunter, 2021). This limits the research that can be carried out, since social media requires the user to provide personal information. Thus, this study will incorporate social media applications in the e-learning site so that the personal information of the participants will not be exposed to the public. This study will also enable students to use social media applications in learning English.

1.1 Research Questions

This study was conducted to fulfill the following objectives:

- i) Identify students' perceptions on the usage of social media in English learning, and
- ii) Identify the strengths and weaknesses of using social media in learning English.

2.0 Literature Review

Social media is constantly changing the way people live in diversified aspects. Nowadays, numerous social media platforms are affecting communication, information delivery, knowledge exchange, commerce, education and all different aspects of life (Amin et al., 2020). Social media are web-based platforms where users create and share messages via virtual communities and social networks (Chen, Lin, & Yuan, 2020). Recently, many social media applications are launched with various features and purposes. Twitter emerges as a micro-blogging platform to create a short message to be posted and shared with their audience online. Dabbagh & Kitsantas, (2012), mentioned that social networking sites like Facebook allows the user to connect with other people by inviting them, creating and sharing personal information. YouTube is created to let users find and share content such as sharing videos and photos.

Even though social media is not directly created for educational purposes, it has drawn educators' attention, especially in the English language learning field. Many studies were conducted to validate the use of social media in the English language teaching field. Inayati (2021) stated that social media can be used as a medium to learn English since the nature of social media is in line with the implementation of education and language teaching theories such as constructivism and social-cultural theory. In constructivism, learning occurs when there is a meaningful social interaction that includes community sharing of different perspectives and experiences. This idea applies while using social media.

In addition, social media may impart language skills. Yunus, Salehi, & Chenzi (2020) expressed that social media such as Facebook and blog will give students written language input so they will develop their writing skills. It also facilitates the students to learn new words and vocabulary which are suitable for them in writing (Khan, Ayaz, & Faheem, 2016). Social media also may enhance student speaking abilities through the conversations conducted with English native speakers (Ehsan & Nasri, 2019). Furthermore, Arumugam, Wan, Shanthi, & Mello, (2019) described that social media like Facebook and WhatsApp permit students and teachers to create a learning group. Then the activities in the group such as sharing reading material, reading aloud practice, and discussing a reading text allow students to be more involved in the reading exercise that helps to improve their reading skills.

The capability to utilize the knowledge especially in technology can create interesting contents for teaching. Material preparation is very thought-provoking when using technology (Syaiful et. al., 2021). This is able to attract students' attention to follow the online learning because they are happy and enjoy it. This will lead to the students' active involvement in social media platforms. On the other hand, learning through social media allows both students and educators to use technology to learn more or get more knowledge. According to Hidayat et al. (2022), students have strong critical thinking abilities infuse technological learning approach. (Sasmita & Harjono,

2021), mentioned that students can be taught through problem-based learning when completing given assignments or helping others when utilizing social media in learning process.

Based on the explanation above, a study on Politeknik Tuanku Sultanah Bahiyah students' perception on utilizing the social media for learning English is important to be investigated since teachers need to know their students' preferences in terms of what social media application they prefer and their ways of using social media for learning English.

3.0 Research Methodology

This study involved 100 Semester 3 students who took DUE50032 Communicative English 3 course. The students involved in this study are required to be actively involved in social media-based activities conducted through the course's e-learning site. The chosen social media are Wiki, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. The students have to engage in the activities given for a period of 10 weeks. At the end of the 10th week, the questionnaire was given to the students. They are required to answer the questions given, to identify their views on the four types of social media selected for this study. The feedback obtained will be calculated and analyzed according to a certain percentage of agreeing and disagreeing based on the statement of the question given.

4.0 Results and Discussion

The findings of this study will be divided into two parts. The first part is students' perception of social media in English teaching, while the second part is a list of strengths and weaknesses of social media in the English teaching process.

4.1 Students' perceptions on social media usage

4.1.1 Students' perception of Wiki

Table 1 Students' perception of Wiki

Statements	Agree	Disagree
I worked with friends in completing the Wiki.	58%	42%
I joined the Wiki activity to improve writing skills.	65%	35%
I contributed more in Wiki activities compared to in class	53%	47%

Table 1 shows students' perceptions on the use of Wiki as an application that helps them write English essays. In general, students gave positive feedback on the use of the Wiki. A total of 58% of them agreed that they cooperated with other friends in completing the necessary information in the Wiki and 65% of the students also thought that the Wiki had improved their writing skills, meanwhile 53% stated that they contributed more in Wiki activities than classroom conducted activities. This finding supports the results of Kessler's (2019) study which shows that the use of Wiki has helped students work together to learn the correct structure of writing. This application allows

students to strengthen their writing with the help of friends without the need for supervision from students.

4.1.2 Students' Perception towards Facebook

Table 2 Students' Perception towards Facebook

Statements	Agree	Disagree
I actively discuss through Facebook	85%	15%
I like to chat with friends through Facebook	83%	17%
I took the opportunity to write more a lot on Facebook	67%	33%

Table 2 shows the students' perception of the use of Facebook in the e-learning system. Facebook is used as a platform for scientific and social discussion. The findings clearly show the popularity of Facebook among students. A total of 85% of students admit that they actively discuss through the media and 83% state they like to chat with friends through Facebook. However, only 67% think they take the opportunity to write more in Facebook than in other media. Through the observations conducted, students were found to be more inclined to share their views through Facebook. Students who are usually passive in class are also seen to be more active when discussing through the social media application. This scenario is seen to be in line with the results of the study of Roblyer, McDaniel, Webb, Herman, and Witty (2020), which is that students are said to prefer discussions through Facebook because this application bridges the gap between group members and facilitates the sharing of opinions.

4.1.3 Students' Perception towards Twitter

Table 3 Students' Perception towards Twitter

Statements	Agree	Disagree
I follow Twitter to learn new words/ vocabulary	56%	44%
I follow Twitter to acquire latest information	49%	51%
I follow Twitter to get grammar guide	38%	62%

Table 3 shows students' perceptions of the use of Twitter in English teaching through e-learning sites. The percentage of students who like Twitter is seen to be lower than other social media. Only 56% agreed that they follow Twitter to learn new words, while 49% follow Twitter to obtain the latest information. Additionally, only 38% of students follow Twitter for grammar guidance. Twitter is considered more suitable for learning new words since each content sent by users cannot exceed 140 characters (Kop, 2017). This limitation causes its use for other purposes such as improving writing and speaking skills may not yield good results.

4.1.4 Students' Perception towards YouTube

Table 4 Students' Perception towards YouTube

Statements	Agree	Disagree
YouTube videos helped me in improving my speaking skills	75%	25%
YouTube videos helped me understand using better Grammar	45%	55%
YouTube videos helped me in writing skills	41%	59%

Table 4 shows students' perceptions of the use of YouTube videos in English teaching given through the e-learning system. A total of 75% of students agreed that the videos watched through YouTube helped them a lot in their speaking skills. There are many videos that teach about correct pronunciation and also effective pronunciation techniques. However, only 45% of students think YouTube videos helped them understand grammar. In addition, 41% of students also think that YouTube videos assisted them in terms of writing skills. Although there are interesting videos on grammar and writing skills provided, students generally think that this social media is more suitable to use to strengthen their mastery of speaking skills.

4.2 Strengths and Weaknesses of Social Media

Based on the findings of the study, some strengths and weaknesses of social media in learning English have been identified. In terms of strength, social media has been found to help share knowledge and information openly. Students do not feel embarrassed because the interaction takes place virtually, rather than face-to-face. In addition, social media also provides a good language learning context. Discussions through Facebook, for example, help students connect with students from abroad who need them to use English properly.

Moreover, social media is an effective way to increase student engagement and build better communication skills. Students who rarely raise a hand in class may feel more comfortable expressing themselves on Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube. Social networking platforms enable teachers to establish "back channels" that foster discussion and surface ideas that students are too shy or intimidated to voice out loud.

In terms of the weaknesses of social media, the use of this application can reduce control over student activities. Instructors may also find it difficult to control students in social media. The issue of access to the internet can also hinder the use of social media in learning. In addition, social media can also be a threat to the correct use of grammar. Students may be obsessed with the use of "Internet language" or "bahasa rojak". This situation will affect the language proficiency of the students. The issue of personal confidentiality should also be noted. Students will feel uncomfortable interacting if their personal information is not protected from unknown public. Therefore, guidelines for the use of social media in learning need to be created to

maximize the potential of social media applications.

The tendency for addiction should be considered. When the youth uses social media platforms for an uncontrolled period and cannot stop themselves from using such applications, then they get addicted to them, and such addiction can lead to profound negative implications on their mental as well as physical health. The attention of any student gets diverted once they get extra attached to social media, and the focus on study gets completely lost. After a lot of studies, it can be observed that students tend to waste a lot of time on social media and stop doing the essential tasks that they should do in their curricular life.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

Overall, this study has identified undergraduate students' attitudes towards the use of social media in English teaching. Facebook is found to be very popular among students and this social media is widely used for discussion purposes. Wiki is used to encourage the sharing of views in writing. Students were also found to be able to learn the structure of writing more effectively through Wiki. In addition, YouTube videos were found to be able to help students improve their speaking skills, while Twitter was used to learn new words.

This study has also listed the strengths and weaknesses of social media in teaching English. Although there are constraints in its use, social media can increase students' interest in learning English. Social media applications provide a good context and facilities for language learning. However, the instructor must use these applications wisely so that the set objectives can be achieved. Further research on the impact of social media on student performance can be conducted in the future to prove its effectiveness in learning.

Teaching English using social media can be an effective medium for providing the material. Still, it depends on the teacher's creativity to build exciting material using many sources in books or the internet and utilize the features of social media. Also, the teacher needs to have a strategy to attract students' attention to understand and follow the lesson well.

As for recommendations, the teaching materials should be interesting, variant, and related to the students' interests. The variation of the material would avoid students feel dull with the classes. The teacher can search through the internet or YouTube to find out exciting material based on the features of social media which the teacher used. Second, the students should be able to practice their English skills. Even though they are in different places, they can still practice their English skills and guide them. The teacher could improve their variation of the assignment to enhance the students' skills. The teacher can instruct them to make a video and send it to the WhatsApp group to practice their speaking skills or listen to a conversation to practice their listening skills. The teacher could use so many variations to

improve the students' skills using social media features in this online learning.

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Author Contributions

K.Navin Kumaran: Introduction, Literature Review, Conceptualization, Conclusion, Writing-Original Draft Preparation, Writing-Reviewing and Editing; **Yogeswari Padmanathan:** Literature Review, Conceptualization, Results and Discussion, References, Writing-Reviewing and Editing.

Conflicts of Interest

The manuscript has not been published elsewhere and is not under consideration by other journals. All authors have approved the review, agree with its submission and declare no conflict of interest in the manuscript.

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